



# Security Council

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## United Nations Disengagement Observer Force

### Report of the Secretary-General

#### I. Introduction

1. The present report provides an account of the activities of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) from 21 May to 20 August 2022, pursuant to the mandate set out in Security Council resolution [350 \(1974\)](#) and extended in subsequent Council resolutions, most recently resolution [2639 \(2022\)](#).

#### II. Situation in the area of operations and activities of the Force

2. During the reporting period, the ceasefire between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic was generally maintained, despite several violations of the Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian Forces of 1974. The overall security situation in the UNDOF area of operations remained volatile, with continued military activity in the areas of separation and limitation in violation of relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution [2639 \(2022\)](#).

3. In employing its best efforts to maintain the ceasefire and see that it is scrupulously observed, as prescribed in the Disengagement of Forces Agreement, UNDOF reports all breaches of the ceasefire line that it observes. All incidents of firing across the ceasefire line, as well as the crossing of the ceasefire line by aircraft, drones, military vehicles and personnel, as well as other individuals, constitute violations of the Agreement. In its regular interactions with both sides, the leadership of UNDOF continued to call upon the parties to exercise restraint and avoid any activities that might lead to an escalation of the situation.

4. On 1 June, United Nations personnel observed five bursts of heavy machine-gun fire from an Israel Defense Forces tank on the Alpha side (Israeli-occupied Golan), impacting a location south-east of Hurriyah in the area of separation.

5. Early on 8 June, United Nations personnel at position 85 heard two high-explosive rounds fired from north-west of the position on the Alpha side. At around the same time, United Nations personnel at observation post 54 heard and noticed one explosion and smoke south of the post inside the area of separation. Later that day, the personnel at position 85 observed 20 bursts of machine-gun fire and three high-explosive rounds fired from the Alpha side north-west of their position, impacting a location in the area of separation. The personnel at observation post 54 noticed one projectile fired from the Alpha side towards the area of separation, impacting the



vicinity of a Syrian armed forces position in the area of limitation on the Bravo side. A UNDOF patrol, dispatched to the general area of the impact of the projectile, concluded that two high-explosive rounds and machine-gun fire had destroyed a temporary Syrian armed forces position in the vicinity of the ceasefire line. The Israel Defense Forces had previously protested to UNDOF regarding the presence of that position.

6. Early on 15 June, United Nations personnel at observation post 53 observed eight machine-gun rounds fired from an Israel Defense Forces main battle tank impact a forest west of Kudnaa village, in the area of separation. On the same day, United Nations personnel also noticed, on two separate occasions, the Israel Defense Forces firing rounds from an armoured personnel carrier into the area of separation. The Israel Defense Forces informed UNDOF that they had fired shots to ward off individuals from getting close to their patrol on the Alpha side.

7. On 18 August, United Nations personnel at various locations in the central part of the area of separation observed four explosions in the vicinity of the Bravo line and one projectile fired from a location west of observation post 72 and impacting a site north of the post. UNDOF could not determine the point of origin of the projectile. During these developments, United Nations personnel at the observation post went into shelter, where they remained for approximately one hour.

8. On several occasions in June and July, United Nations personnel found Israel Defense Forces personnel firing small arms shots into the area of separation to ostensibly ward off individuals on the Bravo side from the Israeli technical fence. On two occasions on 26 July, a UNDOF patrol observed the Israel Defense Forces firing small-arms shots towards the area of separation in the vicinity of the ceasefire line. The shots impacted a point at least 50 metres from the patrol.

9. During the reporting period, United Nations personnel at various positions observed 26 drones crossing the ceasefire line from the Alpha side and flying over the area of separation.

10. Sporadic heavy explosions and bursts of heavy machine-gun and small-arms fire persisted throughout the reporting period in the areas of separation and limitation on the Bravo side. UNDOF assessed that the military activity was the result of controlled detonation of unexploded ordnance as part of clearance and training activities by Syrian armed forces personnel. UNDOF observed the continued presence of Syrian armed forces, some of whom were armed, staffing several checkpoints within the area of separation, in violation of the Disengagement of Forces Agreement.

11. The continued presence of Iron Dome systems, artillery systems and multiple rocket launcher systems in the area of limitation on the Alpha side also constitutes a violation in each case. Pursuant to the Disengagement of Forces Agreement, the presence of any unauthorized military equipment or personnel in the areas of separation and limitation is a violation.

12. UNDOF protested to the parties with regard to all violations of the Disengagement of Forces Agreement that it had observed, including the firing into and across the area of separation, as well as across the ceasefire line, the presence of unauthorized equipment and personnel in the areas of separation and limitation, and the crossings of the ceasefire line by the Israel Defense Forces and by drones, as well as by civilians from the Bravo side. UNDOF closely liaised with the parties to de-escalate the situation, including during periods of heightened tension.

13. During the reporting period, the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed several letters to the President of the Security Council and to me. In a letter dated 23 May (S/2022/413), the Permanent Representative conveyed that on 20 May, “the Israeli enemy fired bursts of surface-

to-surface rockets from the occupied Syrian Arab Golan at certain points south of Damascus, resulting in the deaths of three persons and material damage”. The Permanent Representative, in a letter dated 31 May (S/2022/444), relayed the information that “the recent attack launched by Israeli occupation forces on Friday, 20 May ... resulted in the death of a civilian worker, injuries to other workers and significant material damage”. He also stated in a letter dated 10 June (S/2022/474) that, on that day, “the Israeli occupation forces launched a new treacherous air attack ... from the direction of the occupied Syrian Golan targeting certain points south of Damascus, causing casualties among defenceless civilians and material losses”. In a letter dated 13 June (S/2022/483), the Permanent Representative stated that “the cowardly Israeli attack launched on Friday, 10 June ... targeted Damascus International Airport, causing massive destruction to its two runways and technical equipment, ... resulting in the airport being put completely out of service”.

14. In addition, in a letter dated 8 June (S/2022/465), the Permanent Representative conveyed that on 6 June, “the Israeli occupation forces launched an air attack from the occupied Syrian Golan against certain points south of Damascus”. In a letter dated 22 July (S/2022/572), he stated that, on that day, “the occupying Israeli forces carried out a criminal aerial attack, ... from the occupied Syrian Arab Golan at some points in the environs of Damascus. Three soldiers were killed and another seven were wounded in this cowardly attack”.

15. In two letters, dated 7 June (S/2022/463) and 15 July (S/2022/563), the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations conveyed information regarding “Syrian violations of the Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian Forces of 1974 and breaches of Israeli sovereignty” from January to March 2022 and from April to June 2022, respectively. He stated in both letters that “Syrian violations of the Alpha line and armed presence in the area of separation occur daily”.

16. UNDOF continued to observe daily crossings of the ceasefire line by unidentified individuals from the Bravo side. It assessed that the individuals were shepherds and farmers from surrounding areas tending livestock, as well as hunters carrying weapons. The Israel Defense Forces continued to express deep concern about the crossings, which they stated were a threat to the safety and security of their personnel operating in proximity to the ceasefire line. On several occasions, the Israel Defense Forces fired shots, to discourage individuals from approaching the Israeli technical fence. UNDOF continued to coordinate with both parties regarding the distribution by the Syrian authorities of identity cards to the shepherds in the local community in the area of separation in order to enable them to move within the vicinity of the ceasefire line and to prevent the recurrence of incidents of firing of shots.

17. On three separate occasions, on 7 and 18 June and 27 July, UNDOF, at the request of the parties, supported the International Committee of the Red Cross in facilitating the return of four Syrian nationals whom the Israel Defense Forces had apprehended and detained for allegedly crossing the ceasefire line. The Israel Defense Forces detained, on 25 and 31 May and 19 July, three Syrian nationals and subsequently released them on the same day at the same location from where they had been apprehended.

18. UNDOF assessed that the security situation in the northern and central parts of its area of operations on the Bravo side had generally remained calm but continued to be volatile in the southern part, with security incidents reportedly occurring in locations in the area of limitation, including along UNDOF patrol routes in Dara’a Governorate. There were open-source reports of continued security incidents, in Tafas, Jaseem and Nawa in the southern part of the area of limitation, involving armed attacks targeting checkpoints and convoys of the Syrian security forces, other

government authorities and former members of armed opposition groups. There were also open-source reports of deterioration in the security situation in Tafas from 24 to 27 July and on 10 August due to clashes between the Syrian armed forces and some armed individuals, with tensions remaining high.

19. UNDOF continued to implement its mandate in the context of measures adopted by the authorities of Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic to control the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). The measures continued to include limitations on the movement of United Nations personnel, as well as their mandatory testing and quarantine, after any crossing between the two sides and cross-border movement between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic. UNDOF continued to vaccinate its military and civilian personnel. During the reporting period, five UNDOF personnel tested positive for COVID-19 and have since recovered.

20. Since early March 2020, the Israel Defense Forces have restricted the movement of UNDOF and Observer Group Golan personnel through the Alpha gate at the Qunaytirah crossing, requiring advance notice of the movement, which has continued to affect the operational and administrative activities of the mission. UNDOF continued to liaise with the Israel Defense Forces on their facilitation of the crossing of UNDOF and Observer Group Golan personnel at the Qunaytirah crossing and, in particular, on the need for United Nations personnel to cross using only documents issued by UNDOF at the Alpha gate and to return to the established crossing procedures. The Syrian authorities returned to the procedures established to facilitate the movement of UNDOF personnel and supplies through the Bravo gate at the Qunaytirah crossing.

21. UNDOF continued to engage with the Israel Defense Forces with a view to addressing restrictions on the movement and access of United Nations personnel from the Alpha side, through the Israeli technical fence, to United Nations observation posts in the area of separation.

22. Since 18 May, the Israel Defense Forces have continued to facilitate the UNDOF inspections, carried out through Observer Group Golan, of military positions in select parts of the area of limitation on the Alpha side. For the first time since 9 August 2021, the Syrian authorities facilitated, from 8 June, the resumption of the inspections of positions of the Syrian armed forces in select parts of the area of limitation on the Bravo side. UNDOF continued to engage with both parties on their facilitation of the extension of the inspections in the respective areas of limitation.

23. As part of the return to full mandate implementation, UNDOF continued with the restoration, repainting and refurbishment of the barrels marking the ceasefire line and the Bravo line, which delineate the area of separation, with 44 barrels restored along the ceasefire line and 102 barrels along the Bravo line. UNDOF continued to consult the parties on the barrel restoration activity.

24. Progress in the incremental return of UNDOF to the Bravo side continued during the reporting period. The reconstruction of observation post 58 was completed in August, and Observer Group Golan military observers reoccupied the post that month. The reconstruction of observation post 52 is anticipated to commence in December 2022. The reoccupation of the post will complete the return of Observer Group Golan to observation posts that the military observers had vacated temporarily in 2014 owing to the deteriorating security situation.

25. UNDOF operations continued to be supported by the military observers of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization in Observer Group Golan, who are under the operational control of UNDOF and maintain 10 fixed observation posts within the UNDOF area of operations and one temporary observation post along the ceasefire line. The focus of Observer Group Golan remained continuous static

observation and situational awareness. The military observers are also tasked to carry out investigations of incidents within the UNDOF area of operations.

26. UNDOF monthly operational patrols continued on routes in the areas of separation and limitation, with 1,262 operational activities carried out in May, 1,232 in June and 1,286 in July. UNDOF patrol routes cover the full breadth of the area of separation and 70 per cent of the area of limitation. The security situation in the central part of the area of operations and the volatile security situation in the southern sector continued to slow down progress in opening new patrol routes in the area of limitation on the Bravo side.

27. The movement of UNDOF personnel through Lebanon has been restricted owing to Lebanese administrative requirements. The route between Beirut and Damascus, through the Judaydah and Masna'a border crossing, which is a primary resupply route for UNDOF, remained open for the commercial movement of goods during the period. It also recently became the main route for UNDOF troops rotating through Beirut.

28. UNDOF continued to assess that a significant threat to United Nations personnel in its area of operations remained due to explosive remnants of war, including unexploded ordnance and mines, as well as a probable threat from the possible presence of sleeper cells of armed groups.

29. UNDOF continued to conduct and update its contingency planning for the reinforcement and evacuation of positions and observation posts on both the Alpha and Bravo sides, in addition to regular rehearsals, exercises and training for identified contingencies. Risk mitigation measures, including force protection measures, continued to be developed at positions and observation posts and at the operational base at Camp Ziouani and headquarters at Camp Faouar.

30. During the reporting period, UNDOF reported no cases of misconduct. The mission continued to implement activities, including the regular training of personnel related to prevention, enforcement and remedial actions regarding misconduct.

31. As at 20 August, UNDOF comprised 1,117 troops, including 75 women peacekeepers. Troops were deployed from Bhutan (3), Czechia (4), Fiji (150), Ghana (6), India (198), Ireland (130), Nepal (412), the Netherlands (1) and Uruguay (213). In addition, 71 military observers from Observer Group Golan, including 11 women, assisted UNDOF in carrying out its tasks.

### **III. Implementation of Security Council resolution 338 (1973)**

32. In its resolution 2639 (2022), the Security Council called upon the parties concerned to implement immediately its resolution 338 (1973). It decided to renew the mandate of UNDOF for a period of six months, until 31 December 2022, and requested the Secretary-General to report every 90 days on developments in the situation and the measures taken to implement resolution 338 (1973). The search for a peaceful settlement of the conflict in the Middle East, in particular the efforts made at various levels to implement resolution 338 (1973), was addressed in my report on the situation in the Middle East (A/76/194), submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 75/24 on the Syrian Golan.

33. Since the discontinuation of indirect peace talks in December 2008, there have been no negotiations between the parties. I look forward to a peaceful resolution of the conflict between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic and the resumption of efforts towards a comprehensive, just and durable peace settlement, as called for by the Security Council in its resolution 338 (1973) and other relevant resolutions.

## IV. Observations

34. At a time that remains particularly volatile for the region, I remain concerned about the continued violations of the Disengagement of Forces Agreement during the reporting period, including breaches of the ceasefire on 1, 8 and 15 June and 18 August, which also posed a risk to United Nations personnel. I call upon the Israel Defense Forces to refrain from firing into the area of separation and across the ceasefire line, as well as crossing the ceasefire line. I also remain concerned by the continued presence of the Syrian armed forces in the area of separation. There should be no military forces or activities in the area of separation other than those of UNDOF. The continued presence of unauthorized weapons and equipment in the area of limitation on both the Alpha and the Bravo sides, as well as the flying of drones across the ceasefire line, are in violation of the Disengagement of Forces Agreement. I urge the parties to the Agreement to exercise utmost restraint and comply with the Agreement. I continue to encourage members of the Security Council to support efforts to raise the awareness of both parties with regard to the risk of escalation and the need to preserve the ceasefire between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic.

35. It remains critical that the parties maintain their liaison with UNDOF. All violations of the ceasefire line increase tensions between the signatories to the Disengagement of Forces Agreement and undermine stability in the area. The continued liaison by UNDOF with the parties has contributed to de-escalation during times of heightened tension.

36. The continued commitment of both Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic to the Disengagement of Forces Agreement and support for the presence of UNDOF remain essential. The full return of UNDOF to the area of separation continues to be a priority for the Force. I count on the continued cooperation of both parties to facilitate the advancement of the Force's plans for an incremental return to operations and positions in the area of separation and to ensure that the Force can implement its mandate fully, including inspections on both sides. At the same time, the parties must continue to support the enhancement of the liaison function of UNDOF.

37. Given the worrying trend of continued violations of the Disengagement of Forces Agreement and the volatile security situation in the southern part of the area of limitation on the Bravo side, the safety and security of military and civilian personnel in UNDOF and Observer Group Golan are of particular concern. It is therefore important that the Security Council continue to bring its influence to bear on the parties concerned to ensure that UNDOF is accorded the ability to operate in a safe and secure manner and is allowed to operate freely in accordance with the Agreement. It is also imperative that the parties continue to facilitate the deployment of all personnel to UNDOF for effective mandate implementation.

38. The continued support of Member States, and in particular the confidence of troop-contributing countries in UNDOF and their commitment to it, remain key factors in the Force's ability to carry out its mandate. I am grateful to the Governments of Bhutan, Czechia, Fiji, Ghana, India, Ireland, Nepal, the Netherlands and Uruguay for their contributions and the commitment, resolve and consummate professionalism of their military personnel in UNDOF. I am also thankful to the Member States that have contributed military observers to the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization.

39. In conclusion, I wish to express my appreciation to Lieutenant General Ishwar Hamal, who completed his assignment as Head of Mission and Force Commander on 8 July, for his leadership of UNDOF. I also thank the military and civilian personnel serving in UNDOF and the military observers in Observer Group Golan, who continue to perform the important tasks assigned to them by the Security Council with efficiency and commitment, under extremely challenging circumstances.

Map

